(c) The project is for supplying drinking water to the city of Mumbai. The anticipated time of completion for the project is 8 years at an estimated cost of Rs. 863 crores.

High Powered Committee to Project Environment of Dahanu Taluka in Maharashtra

2928. SHRI RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in pursuance of the directives of the Supreme Court, Government have formed a High Powered Committee of Experts to protect environment of Dahanu Taluka of Thane District in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the terms and conditions of the Committee;

(c) by when the Committee has been asked to submit its report; and

(d) if the Committee is not yet appointed, the reasons therefor and by when it is expected to be appointed?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per the directive of the Supreme Court, the Dahanu Taluka Environment Protection Authority in the District of Thane, Maharashtra, has been constitued. The Authority inter-alia shall expercise the following powers and perform the following functions:—

(i) to protect the ecologically fragile areas of Dahanu Taluka and to control pollution in the said area.

(ii) to consider and implement the 'Pre-cautionary Principle" and the "Polluter Pays Principle";

(iii) to consider and implement the recommendations given by the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, Nagpur, in respect of Dahanu Taluka.

(iv) to deal with any other relevant environment issues pertaining to Dahanu Taluka, including those which may be referred to it by the Central Government in the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

(c) The term of the Committee is for a period of one year. The authority shall furnish progress reports about its activities from time to time to the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

(d) Does not arise.

Delegation of Powers to Rajasthan for Forest Clearance

2929. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to delegate some powers of exempting the forest land upto 50 hectares to the State Government of Rajasthan from the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, when the forest land is required in public interest;

(b) whether Government are aware that the information required to be compiled from various concerned Departments, takes considerable time; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Central Government to the above mentioned proposal and the remedial steps proposed to be taken to simplify the procedure/ guidelines for timely approval of State Projects?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) to (c) No provision exists in the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for delegating powers to the State Governments. However, the Central Government has been reviewing the guidelines to simplify procedures so that timely approval is accorded to the State projects.